



## **399<sup>TH</sup> COMBAT SUPPORT HOSPITAL FAMILY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER**

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### **MOS still to offer online tax filing**

Military One Source has been receiving many inquiries from the field about offering online tax filing for the upcoming tax season. Please be assured we are in the process of planning for tax preparation services again. While we have not yet finalized who we will team with for our services, please let Soldier and families know that Military One Source will have tax preparation services again this year. Soldiers and families should stay tuned to the Military One Source website for further details or they can call a consultant. As soon as more information becomes available. [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)

### **Family Readiness Groups**

Joining and participating in a Family Readiness Group (FRG) is an excellent way to keep up to date with the latest information and resources available. Membership is not limited to the immediate family of Soldiers, fiancés, friends, employers and extended family members are welcome. An effective FRG recognizes the unit's mission and supports the needs of Soldiers and their families. Find out more about FRG's and the Virtual Family Readiness Groups (VFRG'S) by visiting [www.arfp.org](http://www.arfp.org)

### **Video E-mail launched for Deployed Soldier and their Families**

Soldiers and their families can now communicate by video e-mail through the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) intranet portal. On the first day, more than 3500 video email were sent. AKO video messaging allows for all deployed Active Duty National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers to create video messages on a computer with a web cam. The message is then stored on a server and sent to the recipient via a link. Upon opening the message the recipient clicks on the link to get the streaming video and sound.

Instructions on use of this service are on the AKO home page. Families with an AKO account can send video e-mails from home with a personal computer and a web cam. They can also use Web cams in many of the Yellow-Ribbon rooms on military bases. Military bases in deployed areas typically have Web cams available at cyber cafes.

## Military Special Needs Parents

Do you have a child with special education health needs? If so, you know how important it is to stay informed about issues that affect your child. Staying informed can be especially challenging for military families, because regulations and services for special needs children vary from state to state, and some U.S. laws do not apply.

STOMP is available to educators, administrators, Exceptional Family Member Program (EMFP) coordinators, and other service providers. But, the program's primary focus is on helping parents to advocate for their special needs child. Information about legal issues such as privacy rights and special education are available at little or no cost by contacting STOMP or downloading from the project's website at <http://www.stompproject.org>

### **OPSEC (OPERATIONAL SECURITY) in Civilian Terms.**

**OPSEC (Operational Security) has strict rules; the following is the basic gist of them:**

#### **The Ten OPSEC Points:**

- 1. Don't discuss current or future destinations.**
- 2. Don't discuss current or future operations or missions.**
- 3. Don't discuss current or future dates and times of when soldiers will be in station or conducting exercises.**
- 4. Don't discuss readiness issues and numbers.**
- 5. Don't discuss specific training equipment**
- 6. Don't discuss people's names and billets in conjunction with operations.**
- 7. Don't speculate about current or future operations.**
- 8. Don't spread rumors about current, future, or past operations or movements.**
- 9. Don't assume the enemy is not trying to collect information on you; he is.**
- 10. Be smart, use your head, and always think OPSEC when using email, phone, chat rooms, and message boards.**

## *Child Youth Services: Current Partners*

*AR CYs partners with community-based organizations in order to provide programs and services throughout the nation. Find out more about our current national partners.*

### *CYS*

*United States Army Child and Youth Services (CYS) is an integral part of the Army mission. Our programs support the Soldier which in turn enhances Army readiness. In other words, a soldier can concentrate on his/her mission knowing that their children and youth are safe and supervised by trained and professional staff while participating in quality developmental programs.*



*For details, visit*

*<http://www.armymwr.com/portal/family/childandyouth>*

*National Network of Child Care Resources and Referral National Network of Child Care Resources and Referral (NACCRRRA) is a national network to provide support and resources to child care resource and referral centers, which are located in almost every state. The organization promotes policies and partnerships that facilitate equitable access to affordable, quality child care. Local child care resource and referral centers support providers and assist families by providing access to quality child care and parenting resources. Your Army Reserve CYs can be your liaison for these Child Care Programs.*



*Child care resource and referral centers help families identify quality, affordable child care options throughout the country. They promote national policies and partnerships that support military families.*

*The organization is working with the Department of Defense to provide child care subsidies to Army Reserve families.*

*For details, visit*

*<http://www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms/index.php?program=2>*

### *Military Child Education Coalition*

*Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a non-profit organization focusing on academic and school-related needs of military-connected youth. The staff and volunteers work to establish partnerships between schools and the community to address the impact of deployment and separations on a child's academic success.*



*Trainings are delivered to community professionals and local volunteers to increase awareness of military kids' needs.*

*Initiatives are designed for students and educators  
Technology is utilized to deliver resources and support systems  
to families and educators  
For details, visit <http://www.militarychild.org>*

### *American Legion*

*The [American Legion](http://www.legion.org) is a community service organization for wartime veterans. The membership consists of more than three million men and women in nearly 15,000 post locations throughout the world. Many American Legion youth programs are among the most respected youth opportunities available for young people.  
For details, visit <http://www.legion.org>*



### *Operation: Military Kids*

*[Operation: Military Kids \(OMK\)](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org) is a partnership between the Army Reserve CYS, National Guard, 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Military Child Education Coalition, American Legion and many other community-based organizations. OMK provides support and resources to military youth before, during, and after parents are deployed.*

*Creates community support network for military youth "in our own backyard" when Soldier parents are deployed.*

*Delivers recreation, social and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities.*

*Supports military kids coping with the stress of knowing their deployed parents may be in harm's way.*

*Collaborates with schools to ensure that staff are attuned to the unique needs of military students. Educates the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on Soldiers, families, kids and the community as a whole.*

*Becomes a part of the ongoing 4-H Program in the locations where there are military families.*

*For details, visit*

*<http://www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/home.aspx>*

### *Boys and Girls Clubs of America*

*[Boys and Girls Clubs of America's \(BGCA\)](http://www.bgca.org) is a network of safe, neighborhood-based facilities, for children and teens to come together. Instead of staying home alone after school, club members can participate in activities that support healthy development while earning the support of caring adults who serve as role models and mentors. This is a great*



*program for kids that want to direct their energy towards positive, productive outlets. Clubs reach out to youth who lack access to other community programs. The membership averages \$5-10 each year and many clubs offer memberships free to military kids.*

*Boys & Girls Clubs of America have a national, regional, state and community presence throughout the country*

*They serve more than 4.6 million youth each year.*

*Clubs are led by Youth Development Professionals*

*A strong curriculum is provided in more than 25 areas to include, Character & Leadership, Health & Life Skills and much more*

*For details, visit <http://www.bgca.org>*

#### **4-H**

***4-H*** *The Cooperative Extension Service offers a variety of programming topics to provide research-based information to the community. 4-H is the Youth Development component of the Extension Services and is comprised of young people across the country, learning life skills such as communication, citizenship and leadership. Through age-appropriate projects of their choice, 4-H club members can achieve through public speaking contests, county and state fairs and many more youth oriented events. 4-H has expanded to meet the needs of rural and urban youth, civilian and military.*



*4-H has Youth Development Professionals working in every county throughout the country*

*Programs have a solid foundation in research that is based on interests and needs of youth*

*Their positive youth development strategies have been in place for more than 100 years*

*For details, visit*

*<http://www.4husa.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=3&page=1>*

## **JANUARY NEWSLETTER ADDITIONS FOR HANSCOM**

### **VALENTINE'S DAY PACKING BOX PARTY**

Come help us pack boxes for Valentine's Day for our soldiers at the next Family Support Group Meeting

Saturday, February 10, 2007 1300 to 1600

31 Grenier Street, Bldg 1105A, Hanscom AFB, MA 01731

Please bring appropriate contents for the boxes. We will have lots of materials there so anyone can make a special valentine for the box and we have plenty of boxes for filling. Remember Adopt-a-Platoon.org has donated funds to cover postage. We are told by the soldiers that the last unit put

all the cards they got on the walls of the hospitals. They took them when they left so now we have to send more so they can meet the challenge and fill them up again. We also need to finish the flags we started at Christmas so come and help. There will be refreshments. Remember to also let us know if you are coming so we can let Security know, 1-781-377-0560.



## **DID YOU KNOW? FACTS ABOUT IRAQ**

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at Brown Middle School in Newton, who adopted our unit, have come up with some interesting facts about Iraq. . . . .

Iraq is 170,000 square miles. That's about the size of California.

You could fit 16 Massachusetts' in to Iraq. You could fit 9,332 the size of Newton in to Iraq.

There are 27 million people in Iraq. That's 4.5 times as many as in Massachusetts.

Boston is 5,800 miles from Iraq. If you could walk there at a rate of 3mph for 8 hours/day, it would take 9 months to get there!

If you lined up dollar bills the long way- 6 inches across- from here to Baghdad it would be over 62 million of them! That's enough to make 27 stacks as tall as the Prudential Tower in Boston.

The time in Iraq is 8 hours ahead of Boston. When we get to school at 8:30 am it is already 4:30 pm in Iraq.

## **ARMY RESERVE TEEN PANEL**



The Army Reserve Teen Panel (ARTP) is again looking for volunteers to serve on the Advisory Panel at the National level. The ARTP allows teens an opportunity to develop effective strategies and implement solutions for issues they face as military youth.

The basic qualifications are; a family member of an Army Reserve soldier or civilian employee, a member in good standing in the military or civilian community, enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2007-2008 school year, and maintains a grade point average of "C" or better in school.

If selected you would be expected to attend up to 2 meetings during the year, work at least 8 hours per month with military or community activities, and work with fellow teens to develop innovative programs and opportunities.

For more information go online to <https://www.arfp.org/cys> or contact Jennifer Benjamin, the Child and Youth Services Regional Coordinator at her office at 1-718-352-5131.

**The deadline for all applications is February 2, 2007**



### **OPERATION HERO MILES: A UNIQUE WAY TO HELP THE TROOPS**

Operation Hero Miles was created by Congressman Ruppersberger in October 2003 and signed into law by the President. The program allows troops stationed in Iraq to fly home on leave on certain airlines for free using donated frequent flyer miles. Travelers in the United States donate their frequent flyer miles to the Pentagon who helps administrate the program. Airlines who are currently participating include ALASKA AIR LINES, AMERICA WEST, AMERICAN, DELTA, INDEPENDENCE, NORTHWEST, PAN-AM, and US AIRWAYS. To find out more information, read the rules of engagement and download an application go to their web site; <http://www.heromiles.org>. It might be helpful during this year when our soldiers get their leave time.



### **WITH JANUARY COMES THOUGHTS OF INCOME TAX**

It's that time of year again to get out the calculators, adding machines or computer programs, reams of paper, pencils and erasers, boxes of receipts, bottles of aspirin, and extra light bulbs

for staying up late. If you are not the one who usually does it in your household take heart there is a lot of help out there.

First of all make sure you know if you have to file by the usual deadline of April 15<sup>th</sup>. There are combat zone and hazardous duty deadline extensions if "you or your spouse are serving in a combat zone or in direct support of those in the combat zone and receive hostile fire or imminent danger pay." The deadline is extended to 180 days after the last day your soldier is in the combat zone or hazardous duty area. Don't forget to be sure if your state has a state income tax requirement that this exclusion covers your state also. Our Command should have notified the IRS of our deployment but you may certainly cover yourself by notifying the IRS directly. You can go to [www.combatzone@irs.gov](mailto:www.combatzone@irs.gov), a special site set up for this purpose and notify the IRS of your soldier's status. You will need to provide them with the name, stateside address, date of birth, and date of deployment. **DO NOT INCLUDE A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OVER THE INTERNET.** This notification must be done by the taxpayer, spouse, authorized representative. If you have any specific questions regarding tax account information the IRS will answer them via written correspondence since no information can go out over the internet. They do have available a publication that will help answer your questions. Their direct helpline is 1-800-829-1040.

If you are expecting a refund and want to go ahead and do your taxes there is plenty of help out there. Many of our military installations have help through the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance Program. Check in with the Family Support Program office. Another resource is Military OneSource. Beginning January 15, 2007, in conjunction with H & R Block they are offering the H & R Block TaxCut Basic Online free to service members and their dependents. Go directly to Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 for more information. W-2 forms are currently available for your soldier on the my pay web site. Make sure you have a signed power of attorney if filing for a deployed service member. There is a form through the IRS, Form #2848, if you need to get one.

And don't forget to check those figures twice before letting it out of your hands! We could try to arrange for a subject matter expert at our next support group meeting to answer questions if you all are interested. Just let SPC Elaina Desmarais know at 1-781-377-0560. But please give us plenty of time to arrange it.

